



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

assistants we had Edward E. Ruby, who took over the work when I left; and Mrs. Briggs, who took charge of our mail order collection and also spent part of her time visiting hospitals around Coblenz. We found at Third Army headquarters a graduate of the Pratt Institute Library School, Kenneth C. Walker, and succeeded in getting him detailed to the library. Later came Miss Flagg, Mr. Hyde, and Miss Rose.

The kinds of books called for were largely the same as in the camps in this country: O. Henry, Mark Twain, Zane Grey, and Porter. One captain asked for "Alice in Wonderland," but we found "Alice in the Looking Glass," which he took and read, and loaned to several other officers. There was a tremendous demand

for books on the Rhine and books about that region. We could supply only a small part of the demand in that subject, for our stock was limited, and although we had twenty Baedekers, we could have used two or three hundred. Many of the books that came to us were gathered from the camps in France and sent on without repacking. We sent these cases out, thinking they were A. L. A. books. This letter is from a chaplain of the engineers, who received one of these cases. Please note that he is a chaplain. He says, "We are returning the two boxes of books that came from you Monday. They are Bibles. We would like very much to have you send us two boxes of reading, or library books."

A. L. A. NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

By MARY EILEEN AHERN, *Editor, Public Libraries*

I have been asked to tell you some of the things that came under my observation while it was my very great privilege to be overseas these past few months. I come before you with some trepidation, because both you and I remember well the very polished, graceful and finished address which came from overseas last year.

When I received my appointment to go abroad, I was told to report to Mr. Stevenson in Paris. When I reached there, after a very stormy voyage and a most inhospitable welcome from the elements of France, Mr. Stevenson asked me what I expected to do. I said, "I will do anything you want me to do, if I can, and I am just Irish enough to think I can do anything." He said, "I am some Irish myself. I shall expect you to let the people at home know what we are doing here. I shall want you to talk library war service with all the American people you meet in France. Then Dr. Putnam has an idea that you can talk to the French people about public libraries." I said, "All right; I know all about *Public Libraries*; I brought it up, but I can't talk French." He re-

plied, "I think I will trust you." Now, when a man looks straight at you, in that calm, calculating way Mr. Stevenson has, and says, "I will trust you," you know you are on your mettle. I was, at least, and I think if he had asked me to interview M. Clémenceau I should not have hesitated to walk up to him and ask him what he thought about the American Library Association. I know I talked to some people of whom I was more afraid than I should have been of M. Clémenceau.

It seemed to me the first thing to do if I were going to reach the people at home, and let them know what the American Library Association was doing, was to get in touch with the streams that were flowing back toward America, carrying a word of what was going on "over there." But the many things that were occupying the attention of the world at that time, all of which came through one particular channel, made my efforts somewhat disappointing, when trying to reach that particular channel, the Associated Press. I felt bad about it for several weeks, until the Associated Press brought word

to Europe that the camps in America were closing, and that therefore from them the American Library Association would have three and a half million books to give away; and I thought, if that's the way they report things *from* America, what might they not have reported *to* America if I had talked with them. And I was glad I had not been able to make connections. I then turned to local sources.

The Associated Press, as you know, is something of an eastern proposition; and as my office abroad was to go to the center of things, I got in touch with the *Chicago Daily News*. Now, some of you may think there is a better newspaper in the United States than the *Chicago Daily News*; I don't. I make no apology for my prejudice. I do this the more truly because during my stay in Paris I received the most cordial coöperation, the most helpful suggestion, from the *Chicago Daily News*, and moreover, on more than one occasion they allowed me to get through their cabled news, word of what we were doing in France.

I also called on the *Chicago Tribune*. I received cordial support from the *Tribune*, and was told they had a line of papers from Boston to San Francisco, and that if I talked to the point, and stopped when I reached it, they would print what I gave them and see that it was sent out. I know it appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* at home, but whether it got into the other seven papers, I can't say.

You heard what splendid plans have been made for distributing the periodicals and newspapers in France, and without making any comments, or placing the blame on anybody, I must say that if there is anything that works more slowly or incomprehensibly than the mails which carry magazines back and forth to France, and to other European countries, I don't know anything about it, but I do know when you put a magazine in the mail on the other side, and sometimes when you dropped them in on this side, they went nobody knows where.

I shall not go much into details, but I

want to tell you of the splendid coöperation that was given by a number of American newspapers and magazines, for instance *The Outlook*. Mr. Ernst Abbott represented his paper at the Peace conference. I called to see him by appointment and was most cordially received. He was most appreciative in his remarks about what the American Library Association was doing, and as you know, gave us a splendid feature story in *The Outlook*. The *Christian Science Monitor* gave us a column on more than one occasion referring most highly to the work we were doing.

(Miss Ahern told in humorous fashion of her effort at publicity, especially about her call on Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, who was the head of the Peace conference press in Paris; of her astonishment to find such a mild-mannered man as one of the strong participators in the remarkable muck-raking of twenty years ago. Miss Ahern said she thought Mr. Baker in his demeanor, courtesy and kindness more nearly an embodiment of David Grayson.)

The work that I did in Paris was founded on the thought that I was to get news across to the American people of what the A. L. A. was doing with the money and books that had been given for the use of soldiers. That was the main thought in the letters which I sent to America. Then I tried to make widely known, among the soldiers and those who were directing A. E. F. forces in France, the readiness of the A. L. A. to do what it could to make the watching, waiting time of the boys pass as normally and as sanely as might be.

Mr. Stevenson told me one day he would like to have me make a round of the library centers. "You will get the personal touch there better than you will get it from the letters which we have here," he said. My idea of the literary man in business has been changed since my association with Mr. Stevenson as the overseas representative of the American Library Association. We hear sometimes that literary men are not good business men. Well, the keen insight, the untiring

effort, the able handling of the great volume of business shown in the work of Mr. Stevenson furnishes a notable exception. Everyone was pleased with the rapidity and effectiveness of the work that was turned out in getting books to the men from Paris headquarters. The personal testimony every day came in, not only in the letters from thousands of men in all stations of life, but on every occasion that offered discussion of the A. L. A.—a continued expression in one key of the splendid service and the great help that the books were to the men when they came to the American Library Association.

The experiences at the various camps visited ranged from grave to gay, but conditions there will be described by other speakers.

The second part of my work was to bring to the people of France, as opportunity offered, some notion of what the public library in America does, and the possibilities of its extension in France. They have what are called public libraries in France, but they are nothing like what we have here. There are some people, however, who understand what we are trying to do, and are anxious to start that sort of movement in France. I was invited to attend a meeting of a committee appointed by the Government to consider the question of rebuilding some of the destroyed cities in France. They had previously discussed a great many things—heating, lighting, waterways, schools, and what not, and finally they discussed the library. Before I reached Paris, Mr. Kerr had arranged a meeting at which to tell them of the American public library. This he did very adequately, by describing a public library such as he had known in his own town. I supplemented his talk and answered many questions. Professor Ford, of Harvard, was interpreter, and I am quite sure that what Mr. Kerr and I had to say lost nothing in the translation.

The Paris library of the A. L. A. was an exceedingly useful and popular place. It was conducted on the most approved

ideas prevailing in American public libraries. I invited the committee of investigation to visit this library to see American methods of administration at work. They came and several of us took great care to explain just what everything was, how and why everything was used. The quality of the books on the shelves were of a much higher order than the visitors anticipated.

Those who have attended a foreign meeting of librarians will understand what I mean when I say that after it was explained that these books were arranged on the decimal classification, everything else we said to them went through that focus, and our elaborate explanations, given through the interpreter at headquarters, always were answered by some member of the party in a remark about this classification not being quite scientific. Finally I said, "Please tell them we are not concerned in America so much with the question whether our classification is scientific, but whether it gets the books arranged on the shelves so we can get them out quickly to those who want them!" . . .

I was personally invited by Madame Hollenberque, whose articles in *Public Libraries* you have read, and who was interested in trying to start libraries for children, to meet a group of teachers and discuss the question of books for children. I had a very interesting time. The same conclusion, however, that was reached by the former committee was reached by this body of teachers—that France is too poor to add another tax for another institution, and some other way must be found to make the opening wedge; perhaps by presenting a fully equipped children's library, so they may have the example before them as to what can be done.

I had the opportunity also, through various means, of bringing to the attention of a number of the finest of the French women this thing that might take up the leisure time they are afraid they are going to have on their hands after the treaty of peace is signed, and showing them what

a splendid opening there is for educated young women in the extension of library service in France.

I wanted to tell you some of the things of human interest I met, but I have time only to say that the work is going on. One young man told me face to face that these books were the only things, many times, that kept him from going insane. Another man stopped me on the street and said, "You people don't understand what these books have been to us in these devastated regions: we don't know the language, there is no shop where we can buy books, and the spirit which you show in giving us the books, and your own personal service, is something that we shall not forget when we go back home." I want to plead with the librarians to make conditions in their libraries such that when these young men come back, they may retain these exalted ideas of what libraries mean.

I hope I shall be excused if I say the service of the women librarians was more often mentioned than that of the men. Perhaps it was so because I was a woman, and it was loyalty to an ideal. But over and over again they said, "When I go back home I want to tell you that our public library is going to have one 'pusher,' one 'booster'"—one anything, according to the degree of enthusiasm and the vocabulary. Still another man said, "I feel like taking off my hat to you women librarians; here you are over here, on your own initiative, while I would go home on a raft today if I could, and take my chances on getting there; but here you are, staying and working as I have seen you work in this building. I don't understand it." And he took off his trench cap and said, "Here's to the women of the American Library Association!" I re-echo his words.

SIX MONTHS AT HEADQUARTERS AND IN THE FIELD

BY THERESA HITCHLER, *Superintendent, Catalog Department, Public Library, Brooklyn, N. Y.*

My little talk this evening is to be just an informal ramble. I feel that I have been privileged and very fortunate indeed to have camped on both sides of the fence—in the enclosure and out in the field. No one who has not done that really understands what the library war service has meant.

When I first considered the offer that was made to me and came down to Washington and saw Mr. Milam, one of the first questions I asked him was whether I would have a chance to do work in the field. This was his reply: "Miss Hitchler, that depends entirely on you. You may go out in the field just as often as you consider it necessary and feel that you can leave your work at the office. You don't even have to ask me. All I ask is that you leave word where you are going, so we may communicate with you."

That sounded lovely, and when I went to

Washington on December first I had visions of going right out in the field. When I tell you it never occurred to me that I could leave my desk during the first ten weeks, it will give you some idea of how foxy he was. The very first day I arrived I had two shocks; one came before Mr. Milam arrived. I was standing in that tremendous map room where most of the service was conducted, when a door behind me opened and an elderly gentleman looked in. I was directly in the line of his vision, and he appeared to be looking at me when he said, "I don't know why you don't all go home; the war is over!" That was my greeting. He was the legitimate tenant of that room and anxious to have us get out.

The second shock came when Mr. Milam turned over the five hundred and fifty-odd camps throughout the country to me and said, "Go to it." I didn't even know